

281—12.8 (256) Accountability for student achievement. Schools and school districts shall meet the following accountability requirements for increased student achievement. Area education agencies shall provide technical assistance as required by 281—subrule 72.4(7).

12.8(1) Comprehensive school improvement. The general accreditation standards are minimum, uniform requirements. However, the department encourages schools and school districts to go beyond the minimum with their work toward ongoing improvement. As a means to this end, local comprehensive school improvement plans shall be specific to a school or school district and designed, at a minimum, to increase the learning, achievement, and performance of all students.

As a part of ongoing improvement in its educational system, the board shall adopt a written comprehensive school improvement plan designed for continuous school, parental, and community involvement in the development and monitoring of a plan that is aligned with school or school district determined needs. The plan shall incorporate, to the extent possible, the consolidation of federal and state planning, goal setting, and reporting requirements. The plan shall contain, but is not limited to, the following components:

a. Community involvement.

(1) Local community. The school or school district shall involve the local community in decision-making processes as appropriate. The school or school district shall seek input from the local community about, but not limited to, the following elements at least once every five years:

1. Statement of philosophy, beliefs, mission, or vision;
2. Major educational needs; and
3. Student learning goals.

(2) School improvement advisory committee. To meet requirements of Iowa Code section 280.12(2) as amended by 2007 Iowa Acts, Senate File 61, section 1, the board shall appoint and charge a school improvement advisory committee to make recommendations to the board. Based on the committee members' analysis of the needs assessment data, the committee shall make recommendations to the board about the following components:

1. Major educational needs;
2. Student learning goals;
3. Long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement; and
4. Harassment or bullying prevention goals, programs, training, and other initiatives.

(3) At least annually, the school improvement advisory committee shall also make recommendations to the board with regard to, but not limited to, the following:

1. Progress achieved with the annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science in subrule 12.8(3);
2. Progress achieved with other locally determined core indicators; and
3. Annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement.

b. Data collection, analysis, and goal setting.

(1) Policy. The board shall adopt a policy for conducting ongoing and long-range needs assessment processes. This policy shall ensure involvement of and communication with the local community regarding its expectations for adequate preparation for all students as responsible citizens and successful wage earners. The policy shall include provisions for keeping the local community regularly informed of progress on state indicators as described in subrule 12.8(3), other locally determined indicators within the comprehensive school improvement plan as required by Iowa Code section 280.12, and the methods a school district will use to inform kindergarten through grade 3 parents of their individual child's performance biannually as described in 1999 Iowa Acts, House File

743. The policy shall describe how the school or school district shall provide opportunities for local community feedback on an ongoing basis.

(2) Long-range data collection and analysis. The long-range needs assessment process shall include provisions for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information derived from local, state, and national sources. The process shall include provisions for reviewing information acquired over time on the following:

1. State indicators and other locally determined indicators;
2. Locally established student learning goals; and
3. Specific data collection required by federal and state programs.

Schools and school districts shall also collect information about additional factors influencing student achievement which may include, but are not limited to, demographics, attitudes, health, and other risk factors.

(3) Long-range goals. The board, with input from its school improvement advisory committee, shall adopt long-range goals to improve student achievement in at least the areas of reading, mathematics, and science.

(4) Annual data collection and analysis. The ongoing needs assessment process shall include provisions for collecting and analyzing annual assessment data on the state indicators, other locally determined indicators, and locally established student learning goals.

(5) Annual improvement goals. The board, with input from its school improvement advisory committee, shall adopt annual improvement goals based on data from at least one districtwide assessment. The goals shall describe desired annual increase in the curriculum areas of, but not limited to, mathematics, reading, and science achievement for all students, for particular subgroups of students, or both. Annual improvement goals may be set for the early intervention program as described in subrule 12.5(18), other state indicators, locally determined indicators, locally established student learning goals, other curriculum areas, future student employability, or factors influencing student achievement.

c. Content standards and benchmarks.

(1) Policy. The board shall adopt a policy outlining its procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating its total curriculum. The policy shall describe a process for establishing content standards, benchmarks, performance levels, and annual improvement goals aligned with needs assessment information.

(2) Content standards and benchmarks. The board shall adopt clear, rigorous, and challenging content standards and benchmarks in reading, mathematics, and science to guide the learning of students from the date of school entrance until high school graduation. Included in the local standards and benchmarks shall be the core content standards from Iowa's approved standards and assessment system under the applicable provisions of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Standards and benchmarks may be adopted for other curriculum areas defined in 281—Chapter 12, Division V. The comprehensive school improvement plan submitted to the department shall contain, at a minimum, the core content standards for reading, mathematics, and science. The educational program as defined in 281—Chapter 12, Division II, shall incorporate career education, multicultural and gender fair education, technology integration, global education, higher-order thinking skills, learning skills, and communication skills as outlined in subrules 12.5(7), 12.5(8), 12.5(10), and 12.5(11), and subparagraph 12.8(1)“c”(1).

d. Determination and implementation of actions to meet the needs. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall include actions the school or school district shall take districtwide in order to accomplish its long-range and annual improvement goals as required in Iowa Code section 280.12(1)“b.”

(1) Actions shall include, but are not limited to, addressing the improvement of curricular and instructional practices to attain the long-range goals, annual improvement goals, and the early intervention goals as described in subrule 12.5(18).

(2) A school or school district shall document consolidation of state and federal resources and requirements, as appropriate, to implement the actions in its comprehensive school improvement plan. State and federal resources shall be used, as applicable, to support implementation of the plan.

(3) A school or school district may have building-level action plans, aligned with its comprehensive school improvement plan. These may be included in the comprehensive school improvement plan or kept on file at the local level.

e. Evaluation of the comprehensive school improvement plan. A school or school district shall develop strategies to collect data and information to determine if the plan has accomplished the goals for which it was established.

f. Assessment of student progress. Each school or school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan provisions for districtwide assessment of student progress for all students. The plan shall identify valid and reliable student assessments aligned with local content standards, which include the core content standards referenced in subparagraph 12.8(1)“c”(2). These assessments are not limited to commercially developed measures. School districts receiving early intervention funding described in subrule 12.5(18) shall provide for diagnostic reading assessments for kindergarten through grade 3 students.

(1) State indicators. Using at least one districtwide assessment, a school or school district shall assess student progress on the state indicators in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science as specified in subrule 12.8(3). At least one districtwide assessment shall allow for, but not be limited to, the comparison of the school or school district’s students with students from across the state and in the nation in reading, mathematics, and science. A school or school district shall use additional assessments to measure progress on locally determined content standards in at least reading, mathematics, and science.

(2) Performance levels. A school or school district shall establish at least three performance levels on at least one districtwide valid and reliable assessment in the areas of reading and mathematics for at least grades 4, 8, and 11 and science in grades 8 and 11 or use the achievement levels as established by the Iowa Testing Program to meet the intent of this subparagraph (2).

g. Assurances and support. A school or school district shall provide evidence that its board has approved and supports the five-year comprehensive school improvement plan and any future revisions of that plan. This assurance includes the commitment for ongoing improvement of the educational system.

12.8(2) Submission of a comprehensive school improvement plan. A school or school district shall submit to the department and respective area education agency a multiyear comprehensive school improvement plan on or before September 15, 2000. Beginning July 1, 2001, a school or school district shall submit a revised five-year comprehensive school improvement plan by September 15 of the school year following the comprehensive site visit specified in Iowa Code section 256.11 which incorporates, when appropriate, areas of improvement noted by the school improvement visitation team as described in subrule 12.8(4). A school or school district may, at any time, file a revised comprehensive school improvement plan with the department and respective area education agency.

12.8(3) Annual reporting requirements. A school or school district shall, at minimum, report annually to its local community about the progress on the state indicators and other locally determined indicators.

a. State indicators. A school or school district shall collect data on the following indicators for reporting purposes:

(1) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher reading status using at least three achievement levels and by gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(2) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher mathematics status using at least three achievement levels and for gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(3) The percentage of all eighth and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher science status using at least three achievement levels.

(4) The percentage of students considered as dropouts for grades 7 to 12 by gender, race, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(5) The percentage of high school seniors who intend to pursue postsecondary education/training.

(6) The percentage of high school students achieving a score or status on a measure indicating probable postsecondary success. This measure should be the measure used by the majority of students in the school, school district, or attendance center who plan to attend a postsecondary institution.

(7) The percentage of high school graduates who complete a core program of four years of English-language arts and three or more years each of mathematics, science, and social studies.

b. Annual progress report. Each school or school district shall submit an annual progress report to its local community, its respective area education agency, and the department. That report shall be submitted to the department by September 15, 2000, and by September 15 every year thereafter. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

(1) Baseline data on at least one districtwide assessment for the state indicators described in subrule 12.8(3). Every year thereafter the school or school district shall compare the annual data collected with the baseline data. A school or school district is not required to report to the community about subgroup assessment results when a subgroup contains fewer than ten students at a grade level. A school or school district shall report districtwide assessment results for all enrolled and tuitioned-in students.

(2) Locally determined performance levels for at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Student achievement levels as defined by the Iowa Testing Program may be used to fulfill this requirement.

(3) Long-range goals to improve student achievement in the areas of, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.

(4) Annual improvement goals based on at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. One annual improvement goal may address all areas, or individual annual improvement goals for each area may be identified. When a school or school district does not meet its annual improvement goals for one year, it shall include in its annual progress report the actions it will take to meet annual improvement goals for the next school year.

(5) Data on multiple assessments for reporting achievement for all students in the areas of reading and mathematics by September 15, 2001, and for science by September 15, 2003.

(6) Results by individual attendance centers, as appropriate, on the state indicators as stated in subrule 12.8(3) and any other locally determined factors or indicators. An attendance center, for reporting purposes, is a building that houses students in grade 4 or grade 8 or grade 11.

(7) Progress with the use of technology as required by Iowa Code section 295.3. This requirement does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.

(8) School districts are encouraged to provide information on the reading proficiency of kindergarten through grade 3 students by grade level. However, all school districts receiving early intervention block grant funds shall report to the department the progress toward achieving their early intervention goals.

(9) Other reports of progress as the director of the department requires and other reporting requirements as the result of federal and state program consolidation.

12.8(4) Comprehensive school improvement and the accreditation process. All schools and school districts having accreditation on August 18, 1999, are presumed accredited unless or until the state board takes formal action to remove accreditation. The department shall use a Phase I and a Phase II process for the continued accreditation of schools and school districts as defined in Iowa Code section 256.11(10).

a. Phase I. The Phase I process includes ongoing monitoring by the department of each school and school district to determine if it is meeting the goals of its comprehensive school improvement plan and meeting the accreditation standards. Phase I contains the following two components:

(1) Annual comprehensive desk audit. This audit consists of a review by the department of a school or school district's annual progress report. The department shall review the report as required by subrule 12.8(3) and provide feedback regarding the report. The audit shall also include a review by

the department of other annual documentation submitted by a school or school district as required for compliance with the educational standards in Iowa Code section 256.11 and other reports required by the director.

When the department determines a school or school district has areas of noncompliance, the department shall consult with the school or school district to determine what appropriate actions shall be taken by the school or school district. The department shall facilitate technical assistance when requested. When the department determines that a school or school district has not met compliance with one or more accreditation standards within a reasonable amount of time, the school or school district shall submit an action plan that is approved by the department. The action plan shall contain reasonable timelines for coming into compliance. If the department determines that the school or school district is not taking the necessary actions, the director of the department may place the school or school district in a Phase II accreditation process.

If a school or school district does not meet its stated annual improvement goals for at least two consecutive years in the areas of mathematics and reading and is not taking corrective steps, the department shall consult with the school or school district and determine whether a self-study shall be required. The department shall facilitate technical assistance when needed. The self-study shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A review of the comprehensive school improvement plan.
2. A review of each attendance center's student achievement data.
3. Identification of factors that influenced the lack of goal attainment.
4. Submission of new annual improvement goals, if necessary.
5. Submission, if necessary, of a revised comprehensive school improvement plan.

Upon completion of a department-required self-study, the department shall collaborate with the school or school district to determine whether one or more attendance centers are to be identified as in need of improvement. For those attendance centers identified as being in need of improvement, the department shall facilitate technical assistance.

When a school or school district has completed a required self-study and has not met its annual improvement goals for at least two or more consecutive years, the department may conduct a site visit. When a site visit occurs, the department shall determine if appropriate actions were taken. If the site visit findings indicate that appropriate actions were taken, accreditation status shall remain.

(2) Comprehensive site visit. A comprehensive site visit shall occur at least once every five years as required by Iowa Code section 256.11(10) or before, if requested by the school or school district. The purpose of a comprehensive site visit is to assess progress with the comprehensive school improvement plan, to provide a general assessment of educational practices, to make recommendations with regard to the visit findings for the purposes of improving educational practices above the level of minimum compliance, and to determine that a school or school district is in compliance with the accreditation standards. The department and the school district or school may coordinate the accreditation with activities of other accreditation associations. The comprehensive site visit shall include the following components:

1. School improvement site visit team. The department shall determine the size and composition of the school improvement site visit team. The team shall include members of the department staff and may include other members such as, but not limited to, area education agency staff, postsecondary staff, and other school district or school staff.

2. Previsit actions. The school improvement team shall review the five-year comprehensive school improvement plan, annual progress reports, and any other information requested by the department.

3. The site visit report. Upon review of documentation and site visit findings, the department shall provide a written report to the school or school district based on the comprehensive school improvement plan and other general accreditation standards. The report shall state areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and areas, if any, of noncompliance. For areas of noncompliance, the school or school

district shall submit, within a reasonable time frame, an action plan to the department. The department shall determine if the school or school district is implementing the necessary actions to address areas of noncompliance. If the department determines that the school or school district is not taking the necessary actions, the director of the department may place the school or school district in a Phase II accreditation process.

b. Conditions under which a Phase II visit may occur. A Phase II accreditation process shall occur if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- (1) When either the annual monitoring or the comprehensive site visit indicates that a school or school district is deficient and fails to be in compliance with accreditation standards;
- (2) In response to a petition filed with the director of the department requesting such a committee visitation that is signed by 20 percent or more of the registered voters of a school district;
- (3) In response to a petition filed with the director of the department requesting such a committee visitation that is signed by 20 percent or more of the families having enrolled students in a school or school district;
- (4) At the direction of the state board of education; or
- (5) Upon recommendation of the school budget review committee for a district that exceeds its authorized budget or carries a negative unspent balance for at least two consecutive years.

c. The Phase II process. The Phase II process shall consist of monitoring by the department. This monitoring shall include the appointment of an accreditation committee to complete a comprehensive review of the school or school district documentation on file with the department. The accreditation committee shall complete one or more site visits. The Phase II process shall include the following components:

(1) Accreditation committee. The director of the department shall determine accreditation committee membership. The chairperson and majority of the committee shall be department staff. The committee may also include at least one representative from another school or school district, AEA staff, postsecondary education staff, board members, or community members. No member of an accreditation committee shall have a direct interest, as determined by the department, in the school or school district involved in the Phase II process. The accreditation committee shall have access to all documentation obtained from the Phase I process.

(2) Site visit. The accreditation committee shall conduct one or more site visits to determine progress made on noncompliance issues.

(3) Accreditation committee actions. The accreditation committee shall make a recommendation to the director of the department regarding accreditation status of the school or school district. This recommendation shall be contained in a report to the school or school district that includes areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and, if any, the areas still not in compliance. The committee shall provide advice on available resources and technical assistance for meeting the accreditation standards. The school or school district may respond in writing to the director if it does not agree with the findings in the Phase II accreditation committee report.

(4) State board of education actions. The director of the department shall provide a report and a recommendation to the state board as a result of the Phase II accreditation committee visit and findings. The state board shall determine accreditation status. When the state board determines that a school or school district shall not remain accredited, the director of the department shall collaborate with the school or school district board to establish an action plan that includes deadlines by which areas of noncompliance shall be corrected. The action plan is subject to approval by the state board.

(5) Accreditation status. During the period of time the school or school district is implementing the action plan approved by the state board, the school or school district shall remain accredited. The accreditation committee may revisit the school or school district and determine whether the areas of noncompliance have been corrected. The accreditation committee shall report and recommend one of the following actions:

1. The school or school district shall remain accredited.
2. The school or school district shall remain accredited under certain specified conditions.
3. The school or school district shall have its accreditation removed as outlined in Iowa Code section 256.11(12).

The state board shall review the report and recommendation, may request additional information, and shall determine the accreditation status and further actions required by the school or school district as outlined in Iowa Code section 256.11(12).